

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 13632 171022Z
ACTION SS-25

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P R 170935Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8378
INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

S E C R E T CAIRO 13632

EXDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS SO US
SUBJ: SIAD PERCEPTION OF US MILITARY HELP

REF: (A) MOGADISCIO 1402, (B) CAIRO 13537, (C) ALEXANDRIA 775

1. THERE MAY WELL BE A MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN EGYPTIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND PRESIDENCY/EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY RE ARMS SUPPORT FOR SOMALIA. AS I UNDERSTAND IT, GOE HAS NOW RECEIVED TWO SEPARATE REQUESTS FROM SIAD BARRE FOR ARMS. LAST REQUEST INCLUDED PILOTS AND GROUND CREWS FOR SOMALI MIG'S.

2. SADAT'S RESPONSE TO INITIAL REQUEST WAS POSITIVE IN WORD AND DEED. PARTIAL LIST OF ARMS SENT BY SEA AND AIR WAS GIVEN TO US (PARA 1, REF C). LAST REQUEST (PARA 2, REF C) POSED PROBLEMS FOR GOE, BOTH IN TERMS OF CONTENT AND TIMING. BY THEN EGYPT WAS INVOLVED IN A DUST-UP WITH LIBYA AND WAS HARDLY IN A POSITION GIVE AWAY MORE ARMS. UNDERSTAND SADAT INSTRUCTED GAMASY BE AS RESPONSIVE AS POSSIBLE. AT SAME TIME HE TOLD SOMALI ENVOY THAT GOE WOULD OF COURSE HELP AS MUCH AS
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IT COULD.

3. I AM TOLD THAT GAMASY IS OBJECTING TO PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL ARMS, INCLUDING HEAVY EQUIPMENT REQUESTED BY SIAD BARRE, AND ALSO TO DEPLOYMENT OF EAF PILOTS AND GROUND PERSONNEL TO SOMALIA. GAMASY IS ARGUING THAT UNRESOLVED ISRAELI SITUATION AND POSSIBILITY

RENEWED HOSTILITIES WITH LIBYA MAKES IT IMPRUDENT TO SEND MORE ARMS AND PERSONNEL TO SOMALIA. WHEN I ASKED SADAT LAST SUNDAY IN ALEXANDRIA WHETHER HE HAD DECIDED SEND PILOTS TO SOMALIA, HE RESPONDED THAT HE WAS STILL THINKING ABOUT IT. TO A "SADATOLOGIST," THIS INVARIABLY MEANS HE IS GETTING OPPOSITION FROM GAMASY TO ACCEDING TO LATEST SOMALI REQUEST. I HAD NOT HEARD THAT FORMAL TURNDOWN HAS BEEN GIVEN TO LAST REQUEST, BUT THIS WAS IN THE CARDS FOR SOMETIME. SOMALI APPETITES ARE SIMPLY TOO VORACIOUS.

4. RE POSSIBLE SADAT COMMENTS ABOUT US ARMS ASSISTANCE, HAVE NO DIRECT INFORMATION ON THIS. IT IS IN SADAT'S NATURE, HOWEVER, TO BE EXPANSIVE WITH FOREIGN ENVOYS AND I WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF HE TOLD SOMALI EMISSARY THAT HE HAD BEEN ASSURED USG WILL PROVIDE ALL POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE. AS DEPT AWARE, IN INFORMED SADAT OF CURRENT STATE OF PLAY RE ARMS FOR SOMALIA WHEN I MET WITH HIM, AUGUST 14, IN ALEXANDRIA. HIS REACTION REPORTED REF B.

5. FAHMY'S ROLE IN ALL THIS IS LESS CLEAR. HE IS CLOSE TO GAMASY AND KNOWS THE LATTER'S RESERVATIONS ABOUT SENDING MORE ARMS AND PERSONNEL TO SOMALIA. AT SAME TIME HE FRONTS FOR SADAT AND HAS DOUBTLESS DONE HIS PART TO ASSURE SOMALIS THAT GOE HAS SUCCESS-
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FULLY WORKED ON USG TO PROVIDE ARMS. LIKE SADAT, HE BELIEVES THAT WE ARE MAKING A MISTAKE IN HOLDING UP ARMS SUPPLIES TO SOMALIA BECUSE OF OGADEN SITUATION. IN BOTH HIS AND SADAT'S VIEW, ANYTHING THAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP BRING DOWN MENGISTU IS WORTH DOING AND SIAD BARRE'S CURRENT ACTIVITIES ARE SEEN TO FIT INTO THIS PATTERN.
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